

CHAPTER 15 CEQA DISCUSSIONS

15.1 GROWTH INDUCING EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The CEQA Guidelines require an EIR to evaluate indirect or secondary effects of a project, which may include growth-inducing effects. Section 15126(g) of the CEQA Guidelines states that a project could be considered growth inducing if it could “foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.” A development project may have growth-inducing potential if, for example, it extends infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, roads) to undeveloped areas or increases the capacity of existing infrastructure; promotes similar development to occur on adjacent parcels; increases the area’s housing supply; or introduces new employment to an area.

In the absence of other favorable conditions, however, it is unlikely that any one of these components could induce significant growth. The magnitude, location, and timing of growth are ultimately determined by a mix of economic, political, physical, and social factors. Variables including regional economic trends, housing demand, land availability and cost, quality of infrastructure and public services, proximity to employment centers, and regulatory considerations affect the way in which growth occurs.

Section 15126 of the CEQA Guidelines evaluates the extent to which growth could be induced, accelerated, intensified or shifted as a result of implementing the DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan. Subsection (g) provides the framework for a discussion of these potential growth-inducing impacts, as follows:

1. Would the project foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing?
2. Would the project remove obstacles to population growth?
3. Would the project tax existing community facilities?
4. Would the project encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively?

Method of Evaluation

The *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, *Placer County General Plan*, and *North Auburn Community Development Strategy and Design Guidelines* provide for continuing development of DeWitt Center as the primary government center for Placer County. The development visions for the DeWitt Center Study Area expressed in the community plan and development strategy include construction of two-story office buildings and removal of outdated structures.

The lands surrounding DeWitt Center are largely developed. Vacant parcels are scattered among existing residential, commercial, office/professional, and light industrial developments on all sides of the DeWitt Center Study Area. Commercial and residential development has been proposed for the vacant parcels adjacent to the east and south boundaries of the study area. These proposals are currently under review by Placer County.

Constraints to growth in the project vicinity were evaluated qualitatively based on existing land use designations and land uses, and the capacity and extent of proposed infrastructure

improvements. Based upon direction in the CEQA Guidelines, these elements were determined to be key in ascertaining whether the project would induce additional growth beyond the amount anticipated in the General and Community Plans.

Current Constraints to Growth

Substantial new growth south and west of the project area is constrained primarily by lack of infrastructure. All of DeWitt Center is located within existing boundaries of all applicable service providers and will not require annexation to any district boundaries. Infrastructure for provision of treated water, sewer service, and utilities do not exist on the western portion of DeWitt Center, west of the open water ponds. Improvements associated with extension of infrastructure to this portion of the Study Area are included in the proposed project.

Properties south and west of the project area are zoned and designated for residential development, primarily at rural residential densities. Much of the properties to the west are already developed, while development to the south is more scattered. Some of these areas are located outside of service boundaries for water supply and wastewater treatment. Many rural residential properties would use septic systems and not require wastewater treatment.

Removal of Growth Constraints

Population or Economic Growth, Construction of New Housing. Planning documents for Placer County government services, including the *Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan*, predict that the staffing levels at County departments will need to increase as population growth occurs throughout the County in order to maintain an acceptable level of service for County residents. Rather than the proposed project generating population growth in the County, it is a response to the existing population growth trends. The proposed project does not include any changes to existing land use or zoning designations for the project area. It is not expected to influence land development trends in the project vicinity.

The proposed project does not include any new commercial or industrial development, thus will not generate any economic growth. While the land development departments collect fees for some services, those fees are used to offset the costs incurred by the County in processing land development applications. These fees do not generate profits for the County.

The Children's Emergency Shelter and Women's Center (CES and WC) components of the proposed project provide limited residential facilities. Both facilities would provide emergency shelter and transitional housing for narrowly defined populations of people in the County. As these facilities do not serve as permanent housing, they are not considered potential growth-inducing factors.

Infrastructure Development. The County proposes to extend infrastructure from the existing mainlines within DeWitt Center and the NID 10-inch mainline under Atwood Road to the proposed CES and WC sites. Infrastructure would be stubbed at this site and not available for further extension to adjacent rural residential properties. The project does not require annexation into any service area to obtain any public services. Sufficient capacity is available in each service system to serve all parts of the proposed project. As concluded in **CHAPTER 13, PUBLIC FACILITIES**, provision of service to the proposed construction will not impact the

provision of service to existing users. Therefore the infrastructure development proposed with the CES and WC projects does not represent a growth-inducing impact.

15.2 IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

Approximately 80 percent of the DeWitt Center Study Area is currently developed, with natural habitat areas occupying the western portions of the project area. Implementation of the DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan would result in the irreversible demolition of existing structures, as well as limited development in the oak woodland habitat. The existing structures were originally constructed in 1942 and 1943, thus qualifying them as cultural resources. As documented in the *DeWitt Center Existing Conditions Report* (NFA/URS 2002) and in **CHAPTER 12, CULTURAL RESOURCES** of this EIR, the developed portion of DeWitt Center has been identified as a historic architectural district that may be eligible for listing on the state and federal registers of historic resources. Demolition of these structures is an irreversible change in the existing environment that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

New construction within the developed portion of DeWitt Center is not considered to be an environmental change, as it would not substantially change the existing nature of that portion of the area. The *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* designates this area as mixed use and envisions the continued use of the area as a government center. The proposed modernization and development at DeWitt Center concurs with the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* Development Vision for DeWitt Center, which states, “The portion of the area now developed with modified barracks should be replaced with modern office buildings to house County Departments and form the core professional office area of this mixed-use designation” (Placer County 1994).

Development of the CES and WC facilities in the southwestern corner of the Study Area would result in irreversible conversion of a portion of the onsite oak woodland to a rural residential type of land use. The proposed CES and WC sites consist of ± 7 acres, and the preliminary site plans for these facilities assume construction of up to eight individual structures scattered throughout the site. The structures include one $\pm 15,000$ square foot residential facility for the CRH, one $\pm 5,500$ square foot school, one $\pm 8,000$ square foot core facility for the WC, and up to five $\pm 1,600$ square foot duplexes (for a total of ten dwelling units) to serve as transitional housing. Of the seven acres total in the area describing the CES and WC sites, preliminarily identified building footprints and limits of paving would directly disturb approximately one acre of the oak woodland habitat.

The implementation of the proposed project is not expected to generate substantial increases in traffic levels in the project vicinity but is expected to result in short term increases in air pollutant and noise levels in the project area. Permanent impacts to air quality and noise levels are not anticipated.

15.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Cumulative impacts are defined by the CEQA Guidelines as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” CEQA requires EIRs to discuss cumulative impacts when these

impacts are significant. The CEQA Guidelines also describe the types of projects which result in cumulative impacts:

The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

This cumulative impacts section describes the impacts of the proposed DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan project as part of the total development of the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* area. The analysis for this section is based on “a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning documents which is designed to evaluate regional or area-wide conditions” [Section 15130 (b)(1)(B), CEQA Guidelines], and is assumed to have the cumulative conditions presented in the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan EIR*. The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable projects to be included in the cumulative impact analysis pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130, is the buildout of the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, as described in that Plan. The cumulative impacts identified in the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* are incorporated in this EIR by reference.

The *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* identifies and addresses buildout within the ±63.5 square mile planning area. Approximately 37,317 acres within this area were identified for potential development and the EIR focused on the potential land use mix within this area. Approximately 25 square miles were designated for residential development. The projected population at buildout will be approximately 40,672 residents, an increase of ±100%. At the time the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* was written, it was anticipated that 7,592 dwelling units would be constructed, in comparison with the 7,527 existing dwelling units.

While this analysis is primarily based on the buildout conditions of the *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, some specific development projects in the vicinity of DeWitt Center are anticipated to be constructed within the life of the proposed facility plan, including:

- A Home Depot store, located east of DeWitt Center along Willow Creek Drive between Professional Drive and SR 49 (approximately 129,000 square feet).
- An Auto Zone auto parts store, located at the southwest corner of SR 49 and Willow Creek Drive (approximately 5,400 square feet).
- Sullivan Commercial located at the northwest corner of SR 49 and Willow Creek Drive, a co-branded Arco gas station and Wendy’s (3,400 square feet with 12 fueling stations) and 20,000 square feet specialty commercial.
- Highway 49 Racing Pigeon Clubhouse, located on the east side of SR 49 at Poppy Lane (1,344 square feet).
- Rock Creek Plaza renovation, located at southeast quadrant of SR 49 and Bell Road (43,000 square foot expansion of existing commercial center).
- The Atwood Ranch Phases II, III, and V located south of Atwood Road and totaling 229 residential units.
- A new middle school south of Atwood Road.

The *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan EIR* identifies ten environmental resource areas as having potential cumulative impacts, as listed below. A discussion of the contribution of the proposed DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan to the cumulative impacts follows each resource area list of cumulative impacts. These discussions also evaluate the potential of the proposed project to generate any additional cumulative impacts.

Land Use Growth inducing impacts
 Affordable housing ratio (long term)

Land Use Impacts of the Proposed Project: As discussed in Section 15.1 of this chapter, implementation of the proposed project will not induce additional growth in the vicinity. The majority of surrounding land is developed or has already been proposed for development. The expansion of County facilities is necessary in response to existing demands for public services and anticipated future population growth within the county. **CHAPTER 4, LAND USE** of this EIR addresses the impacts of the proposed project on affordable housing in the north Auburn area. As discussed in that chapter, the County has prepared and adopted a housing relocation plan to ensure that eligible residents of the affordable housing that is lost through proposed demolition of Buildings 2 through 5 are given adequate relocation assistance.

Visual Resources

- Visual impacts related to the change in visual character of agricultural and open space lands
- Overall change in visual character of the area due to increased urbanization
- Impact to SR 49 Scenic Corridor due to commercial designation at Florence Lane

Aesthetic Impacts of the Proposed Project: The project area does not support any agricultural lands. The existing area designated as open space that transects the western portion of DeWitt Center will be preserved as open space. As mitigation for impacts to biological resources, the habitats in this area will be restored, which will improve the visual resources of the area. As the majority of DeWitt Center is developed as an urban setting, implementation of the proposed facility plan will not contribute to the increased urbanization of the community plan area. As discussed in **CHAPTER 5, AESTHETICS** of this EIR, the proposed new office buildings are designed to be compatible with the existing structures onsite and to meet all applicable design guidelines. Building styles and materials were selected to be reminiscent of the brick construction of the original onsite buildings and to contribute to the transition from urban atmosphere east of DeWitt Center to the rural nature of lands west of the project area. Additionally, all of the DeWitt Center Study Area zoning designations include the “design scenic corridor” (Dc) overlay, which requires that all new construction projects obtain approval from the Design Review Committee prior to issuance of grading and construction permits.

Florence Lane is approximately three miles north of DeWitt Center. The proposed project will have no impact on the visual qualities of the site at SR 49 and Florence Lane.

Traffic and Circulation

- Increased traffic congestion
- Indirect impacts of proposed road improvements on wetlands and vegetation

Transportation and Circulation Impacts of the Proposed Project: As discussed in **CHAPTER 6, TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION**, project generated traffic will have little effect on the roadway and intersection service levels in the project vicinity in both the near and long term future. The proposed project will result in incremental increases in local and regional traffic. Road improvements included with the proposed project are limited to roadway widening, provision of curb, gutter, and sidewalk for segments of Bell Road, Richardson Drive, and B Avenue, and provision of segments of Class I trails along Richardson Drive and Bell Road. These improvement projects will not result in any additional impacts to wetlands or vegetation, as such resources do not exist in the vicinity of the proposed improvements.

Air Quality Increased pollutant emissions from construction activity
 Increased pollutant emissions from stationary sources
 Increased pollutant emissions from mobile emission sources

Air Quality Impacts of the Proposed Project: Placer County is currently classified as non-attainment for both ozone and particulate matter. South Placer County is managed as a maintenance area for federal carbon monoxide standards, as it was until recently listed as a non-attainment area for these standards. The site preparation, demolition, and construction associated with implementation of the proposed facility plan will generate significant short-term emissions of some pollutants. Mitigation measures are provided to limit emissions to the extent feasible. However, it is expected that some significant short-term emissions will still occur and contribute to regional pollutant concentrations.

Operation of the proposed project is expected to generate some pollutant emissions from both stationary and mobile sources. Stationary source emissions would be related to landscaping maintenance and some use of consumer products. The proposed new construction is expected to accommodate 180 new employees in the County departments housed in the new buildings. That represents a less than ten percent increase over existing employment levels at DeWitt Center of 1,917 employees. Traffic trips generated by these new employees will generate pollutant emissions. Although the stationary and mobile source emissions would be only incrementally higher than under the existing conditions, these emissions will contribute to the cumulative pollutant concentrations throughout Placer County.

Noise Increased traffic noise
 Increased exposure of future receptors to railroad noise
 Increased exposure of existing and future receptors to airport noise

Noise Impacts of the Proposed Project: The proposed project is not expected to contribute to any cumulative noise impacts. The incremental increases in traffic trips generated by the proposed project will not correlate to noticeable increases in traffic noise in the project vicinity. The project will not contribute to increases in airport traffic, nor will it introduce new receptors to areas that experience significant noise levels related to the Auburn Municipal Airport. The project area is not located in an area influenced by railroad noises.

Biotic Resources

- Loss of oak woodlands
- Loss of wetlands
- Impact on wildlife due to loss of habitat

Biological Resources Impacts of the Proposed Project: DeWitt Center supports ± 16.25 acres of oak woodland, ± 2.6 acres of open water ponds, and ± 1.7 acres of other wetland areas. Approximately seven acres of oak woodland would be impacted by the development of the CES and WC facilities, and ± 0.46 acres of wetland habitat would be impacted by the proposed development and anticipated future development. These impacts will contribute to the cumulative losses of these habitat types throughout the community plan area. Mitigation for these impacts includes planting trees to replace those that are impacted or removed, restoration of a portion of the onsite oak woodland habitat, and implementation of a wetland creation and restoration program, as approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

- Geology**
- Impacts from landform alteration
 - Erosion control
 - Seismic hazards

Geology and Soils Impacts of the Proposed Project: DeWitt Center contains relatively flat topography and is located in an area with moderately low seismic activity. The minor amounts of grading and earth moving required to accommodate the proposed construction will not contribute to the cumulative impacts of alteration of existing landforms and soil erosion. Compliance with the Uniform Building Codes in effect at the time of construction and with the site-specific recommendations of a geotechnical engineer are expected to minimize any seismic risks, and therefore eliminate any contribution of the project to the cumulative level of seismic hazards in the community plan area.

Hydrology and Water Quality

- Increases in stormwater runoff and flooding at bridges and culverts
- Impacts of regional downstream flooding
- Degradation of surface water (Rock Creek Reservoir)
- Impacts of recommended water quality protection facilities (Rock Creek Reservoir)
- Degradation of groundwater quality

Hydrology and Water Quality Impacts of the Proposed Project: Implementation of the DeWitt Government Center Facility Plan will incrementally increase the amount of impervious surfaces in the project area. Increases in impervious surfaces will occur at the construction sites, while decreases in impervious surfaces will occur in the sites where demolition occurs. The net increase would generate increases in the rate and volume of surface water runoff from the project area, but the increase in rate is mitigated through expansion of the onsite DeWitt Center Detention Basin and creation of a new detention basin in the northwest corner of the proposed Land Development Building site. This

detention of stormwater runoff will ensure that the proposed project does not contribute to increases in flooding in the project vicinity or downstream.

Impacts to surface water quality could occur during construction and operation of the project through sedimentation of drainageways and introduction of pollutants to runoff water. Mitigation measures have been incorporated in the proposed project to ensure that these impacts do not occur either in the short term or cumulatively. The project has no impact on groundwater resources. Most drainage from the project area will flow to the North Ravine watershed and will have no impact on the Rock Creek watershed. Drainage from ±5.2 acres of the Land Development Building site will flow to the Rock Creek watershed after being detained in the proposed two-basin detention system for this site. Detention will allow for settling of sediment out of the water, minimizing potential of sedimentation of downstream drainages, and mitigation measures included in this EIR require that stormwater runoff be filtered through catchbasins to minimize potential for degradation of water quality.

Cultural Resources

- Impacts to cultural resource areas
- Loss of specific cultural resources

Cultural Resources Impacts of the Proposed Project: The project will contribute to the cumulative loss of historic resources in the community plan area. Most existing structures at DeWitt Center were constructed in the 1940s as part of the DeWitt General Hospital built to serve soldiers from World War II. As such, the developed area of DeWitt Center has been identified as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) as a historic architectural district. Demolition of the buildings that contribute to the architectural district is a significant impact to cultural resources both as a direct impact of the proposed project and as a cumulative impact of development in the community plan area. Additionally, as with any development project, there is a potential for unknown cultural resources to exist below the soil surface. These resources, if present, could be damaged during site preparation, demolition, and construction. Should such an impact occur, it would contribute to the cumulative impacts on cultural resources in the project vicinity.

Public Facilities

- Impacts to Sierra Community College
- Indirect impacts from sewer line construction (collection line extension)
- Impacts to Sheriff's Department (short term)
- Impacts related to new water system facilities
- Wildland fire hazard
- Impacts to Ackerman School District
- Impacts to parks and recreation
- Impacts from installation of electrical transmission lines

Public Facilities Impacts of the Proposed Project: The proposed project will result in very minor increases in demands for public services. A net increase of only ±24,000 square feet of building space will result from the proposed project. New construction will incorporate design elements and fixtures that allow a more efficient use of public services. Therefore, the project will not contribute to cumulative impacts to water supply and sewer service systems.

As discussed above, the project is necessary in response to existing demands for public service and future population growth in the County but is not anticipated to generate any additional population growth. Therefore the project will not contribute to cumulative or short term impacts to Sierra Community College or provision of law enforcement services. In addition, the project includes construction of segments of Class I trails along Richardson Drive and Bell Road to accommodate existing and anticipated future demand for recreation facilities. Therefore the project will not contribute to cumulative impacts to parks and recreation.

The project will place some development within the onsite oak woodland, but incorporates design elements to ensure that risks associated with wildland fire hazards are minimized. These elements include maintenance of clear zones around building exteriors, use of fire resistant materials, and provision of interior sprinklers. This will ensure that the project does not contribute to the cumulative wildland fire risks.

The project area is not located in the Ackerman School District and will not impact that district. No electrical transmission lines will be installed.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The *Auburn/Bowman Community Plan EIR* does not address hazards and hazardous materials.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Impacts of the Proposed Project: **CHAPTER 14, HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** of this EIR finds that some hazardous materials are known to exist at DeWitt Center, including underground storage tanks and building materials containing asbestos and lead. Mitigation measures are provided to ensure that hazardous materials are removed from the project area or stabilized to prevent exposure of people and the environment to additional risks. There are no cumulative impacts associated with these materials anticipated to result from the proposed project.

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